

EPO-PatCom meeting
Tuesday, 15 March 2016, 14.00 hrs
Room 348, EPO Vienna

Summary of the discussions

1. INTRODUCTION

Richard Flammer, Principal Director for Patent Information and the European Patent Academy, welcomed the participants and opened the meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda for the 31st meeting was approved.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 9 November 2015 were approved.

4. WORLD WIDE LEGAL STATUS DATABASE IN XML (LEGSTAT/XML)

The Office reported that it had considered the feedback received during the EPO Patent Information Conference in Copenhagen. Real production of the front-file was planned to start in April after the release of the latest changes. This was also the starting point for the envisaged six months' parallel run of XML and SGML. PatCom members were advised to start their preparations to be able to process XML within the planned six months' parallel production of the old and new formats. In October 2016, the six months would end and XML would become the leading exchange format, but the EPO would continue to provide the SGML product in parallel until the end of 2016 as a courtesy service to users. From week one in 2017 onwards, the frontfile was planned to be delivered exclusively in XML.

Regarding the backfile, the EPO planned a beta-release run in summer. By the end of 2016 the SGML product was planned to be decommissioned and discontinued, meaning that by the beginning of 2017 the worldwide legal status database would be fully based on XML products.

Responding to users' concerns regarding potential delays, the Office stated that extensive testing had been carried out in recent months and delays seemed unlikely. If the system ran smoothly in the coming months,

SGML would be shut down by the end of 2016. Nevertheless, the Office offered to review the situation before the EPO Patent Information Conference in Madrid.

5. DOCDB: XML RICH DATA, PRODUCTION ISSUES

The Office reported that the DOCDB/XML raw data product had remained stable with no new features introduced in the structure of the product. The content was enriched with more detail in the NPL citations and more text items in the original-language character set. Responding to a PatCom member's comment that there were 15 notifications of issues in 2015, the Office reiterated that the production had been quite stable since autumn.

6. SEQUENCE LISTING BACK-FILE

The EPO reported that there were no news yet on the back-file for sequence listings, but it was working on the issue. Although capacities were limited, the Office was hoping to make some progress in 2016.

7. QUALITY AT SOURCE (QAS) PROJECT

During the machine translation project, differences in various data sources had become evident and triggered the Quality at Source initiative. The aim of the project was to consolidate the content and harmonise the data formats of the full-text collections from the member states. The data (backfile and regular frontfile) were hosted, harmonised and formatted by the EPO, but the quality and the guaranteed delivery of the data would be the responsibility of the individual member states. The data were made available via Espacenet.

The work of processing the collections of the first two groups of countries was progressing well. As a result, the first national full-text collections were PT, LT, ES, EE. The subsequent batch contained full-text data from AL, CH, CZ, FI, IE, NL. The rest of the countries were expected to follow later in 2016. The OCR'ed data were also used to fill gaps in English translations of data collections in some countries and to improve the machine translation quality for certain languages (for example Turkish, Finnish and Polish).

In response to a question from PatCom as to how the data were included in products for commercial providers, the Office explained that Quality at Source was a co-operation project with the member states. The ownership of the data remained with the national offices. PatCom underlined that interests of commercial providers needed to be considered. When data were provided on Espacenet, they should be made available to the commercial sector, too. The Office clarified that the fulltext data were OCR'ed data. The EPO was not acting as a broker of national data. Nevertheless, the Office was prepared to discuss the data distribution policy with the member states. PatCom appreciated this approach, which would avoid individual negotiations with national offices on their side.

8. GLOBAL DOSSIER USAGE AND FUTURE PLANNING

The Office reported that the Global Dossier service was completed for the other IP5 partner offices in 2015. There are currently about 47 000 requests per month via the EPO's Global Dossier. The access to Global Dossier was via the European Patent Register, based on an EP patent family member.

Enhancements to the Global Dossier service would include alerting functions and the Global Dossier coverage would be extended to include WIPO CASE and the depository states AU, CA, IL, MY, PH, GB by the end of 2016.

Answering PatCom's question as to whether deep linking direct to individual pages in the file wrapper were (or could be made) possible, the Office explained that the European Patent Register and Espacenet were the only path to access the file wrapper. The service was meant for the end-users and limits on the number of requests per day and per office had been agreed between the IP5 partners. No automated access or extension of the service was planned, as this was not part of the existing agreement. The project was basically built for exchanging data between the examiners of the IP5 offices.

9. FEDERATED REGISTER

The Office reported that the Federated Register Service was progressively being rolled out. Nine offices (AT, CZ, IE, FI, LU, RO, RS, SI, CH) were already in production and five more countries (NL, BE, GR, TR, MK) were in an advanced stage of preparation. LT and ES were ready for technical testing.

10. PATSTAT

The Office informed that since Q1 2016, the databases of the PATSTAT product line had not only been available in raw data format but also online, via PATSTAT Online as an individual product. The EPO planned to enhance PATSTAT Online with a simple form-based interface that would lower the entry barrier for new and occasional users to get familiar with PATSTAT Online and the PATSTAT product line. The Office had commissioned the Catholic University of Leuven to harmonise applicant and inventor data of the most recent and future PATSTAT editions (ranging from the PATSTAT 2015 Spring edition to the PATSTAT 2017 Spring edition). The objective was to offer added-value applicant and

inventor data, this being a vital prerequisite for high-quality patent statistics and patent intelligence.

Answering a question on how the harmonisation of names was prioritised, the Office referred to a white paper published by the Catholic University of Leuven (Pages 30-54 in

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5916785/KS-RA-11-008-EN.PDF/ffe43370-8063-4e07-b77e-0319f1a79294?version=1.0>)

11. EUROPEAN PATENT REGISTER

The Office reported on the features implemented in the November 2015 release of the European Patent Register, namely the removal of the “Quick Search” option because it was redundant, the sort by representative function, the previous-next navigation and the clarification concerning wording of table headings.

Deep links to extension states were not activated until fees were paid.

12. SEARCH STRATEGIES PROJECT

The Office reported on the pilot project on publishing information on search strategies. The project, started in 2015, was initiated in the context of the WIPO Meeting of International Authorities under the PCT (MIA) with US, Canada, Japan and the EPO participating. The information (only available for the frontfile) was presented in form of an additional sheet to the search report, visible via registers and file inspection.

13. UNITARY PATENT

The EPO informed that it would be ready with the technical preparations in April 2016. The implementation was depending on the political agenda of the ratification process. A technical code in the European Bibliographic Database (EBD) was being introduced to indicate unitary effect. No document kind code was foreseen. PatCom asked about a detailed technical specification and a specific numbering. The Office committed to sharing the technical specifications once they were published. A specific numbering was not planned as unitary effect constituted a legal event only. After the first request for unitary protection, it would take approximately four months until the respective data would appear in the databases.

PatCom underlined the importance of possibilities to analyse unitary patents statistically and stated that a marker should be sufficient to filter respective data. The Office confirmed that it was important to have a full overview on the use cases and that SACEPO/PDI was being consulted on this issue.

14. NEW PRODUCTS PLANNED FOR 2016

The Office reported on the successful replacement of MIMOSA and related DVDs by online products, and on the introduction of mobile apps. Responding to a question from the users, the EPO promised to prepare for the next meeting an overview on the mobile services usage statistics. It was also considering native app versions for the mobile services for 2016.

15. ADDITIONAL FREE DATA SOURCES IN THE PIPELINE

The Office informed that linked open data services were under consideration but no final decision had been taken yet.

16. CPC. UPDATE ON ADOPTION BY THE OFFICES AND USAGE, AND RE-CLASSIFICATIONS, ANY DEVELOPMENTS

The Office reported that an increasing number of offices were classifying in CPC (details see below).

CPC status - report per country

Country	Country Code	Number of publications with CPCNO allocations (document level) in Epodoc – status 14/03/2016
Austria	AT	4530
Brazil	BR	4300
China	CN	160000
Finland	FI	4600
Great Britain	GB	116500
Greece	GR	5000
Korea	KR	178000
Spain	ES	29900
Sweden	SE	138500

Estonia

- Classify all national applications & utility models since 2012
- Intention to send to EPO the CPC data as soon as possible

Netherlands

- Joined CPC Nov 2015
- Allocating CPC to national searches but still some changes to be implemented in the administrative system. Expected to be ready in 2017.

Norway

- Started classifying in CPC at end of October 2016
- so far, 1600 applications (1100 national 100 non-residents, and 400 PCT) – all classified in CPC
- Backfile reclassification planned for 2018

Portugal

- Examiners classify in CPC all front files since March 2015
- No plans for backfiles or reclassification

Spain

- Classifying in CPC (not for PCT)

Sweden

- Already classifying in CPC
- Reclassifies documents when CPC changes (within 1 month), in 2015 1100 documents were reclassified

Switzerland

- Will start classifying in CPC in the second half of 2016

UKPTO

- already classifying in CPC

MEXICO

- expected to start classifying in CPC for patent docs published as from January 2017

ROSPATENT

- Will start delivering CPC data in April 2016

Brazil

- Already classifying in CPC in some fields since 2014

KIPO

- Start of CPC classification in all fields in 2015
- 214000 applications classified in 2015
- Currently reclassifying the backfile of the past 10 years across all technical fields, target completion by end 2018.
- KIPO is planning to classify KR-ISA PCT applications into CPC starting from mid-2016

SIPO

- Implementation in number of fields since 2014. Full implementation of CPC starting 2016. SIPO classified 89,000 documents in 2014 and 385,000 publications and 156,000 newly filed applications in 2015. For 2016 SIPO expects to classify 1,100,000 newly filed.
- Considering that the large backfile reclassification volume, it is still under consideration. SIPO currently does not classify PCT applications in CPC, but relevant investigation and study work are ongoing.

Users were interested to know how the quality of classification by the offices was being maintained. The Office reported that the USPTO had dedicated considerable effort in training their examiners. The EPO established statistics for all participating offices to identify training needs and had implemented training according to a train-the-trainer concept.

The Office also informed that combination sets were searchable via Espacenet Smart search.

17. SACEPO/PDI MEETING

The Office informed that the SACEPO/PDI meeting was scheduled on 17 March 2016. The main SACEPO meeting took place in June. It was a meeting for nominated members only and there were no observers.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The EPO reported on its innovation cycle project which was in a starting phase. The objective of the project was to find out where patent information was used, for which purpose and where patent information supported innovation. A consultancy company had conducted a telephone survey with a first sample of interviewees.

19. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was provisionally agreed to hold the next meeting before the opening of the EPO Patent information Conference in Madrid, probably on 7 November 2016 in the afternoon.

31st EPO Patcom meeting

Date: Tuesday 15 March 2016 , 14.00 hrs. Location: EPO Vienna, Room 348

Participants

PatCom

Secretary of PatCom

Jane List, Extract Information

Jurjen Dijkstra, LNU

Armin Foerderer, FIZ Karlsruhe

Robert Fokkema, Lighthouse IP Group

Rahman Hyatt, Minesoft

Martine Massiera, Questel

Paul Peters, CAS

EPO

Principal Director

Patent Information and

European Patent Academy

Director Publication

Director Specialised Services

Richard Flammer

Pierre Avédikian

Günther Vacek

Nigel Clarke

Heidrun Krestel

Davide Lingua

Frédéric Lequeux

Daniel Shalloe

Christian Soltmann